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LIFE AND WORK

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OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL INSTITUTE

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Notes

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The magazine *Stockholm* is edited, on behalf of the Commission, by Dr. Adolf Keller, General Secretary, Professor A. Titius, Principal Garvie, and M. Elie Gounelle, and published by Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, in English, French and German. It contains articles of a scientific character on questions of principle and social questions and gives detailed information as to the social work done by the Churches. An endeavour is made, by means of extracts or summaries supplied by the authors themselves, to make the articles available for those who do not read the original language.

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Owing to a printers' strike the issuing of the present number of the Bulletin has been held up for some time.

A. Commissions of the Continuation Committee.

The International Institute of Social Christianity in Geneva.

Various Commissions of the Institute met on April 8 and 10. The first was the Commission for Relations with the World of Labour, which has been enlarged and has drawn up its programme of work. This includes an extensive investigation of the attitude of the working-class to the Church, and vice versa, as shown by the press and official pronouncements. It also includes meetings of representatives of the two groups, of the type already being successfully carried on in Sweden and England.

Then followed the meetings of the Commission of the Institute ; Archbishop Germanos will henceforth be a member of the Commission as a representative of the Orthodox world, and in order to promote its cooperation with the Institute. The Commission laid down the subjects to be studied by the Research Department, which is a special section of the Institute, as follows : unemployment, housing question, conditions of work. At the next meeting of the Continuation Committee, at Eisenach, the following subject will be dealt with : «Christianity and the World of Labour. » An investigation into conditions amongst sailors visiting foreign ports has already been begun.

Further, closer cooperation will be sought with the religious organisations which are carrying on social research, especially with the international religious organisations having their headquarters at Geneva, and with the research department of the International Missionary Council. A conference of scientific experts in social questions is also on the programme. The meeting of the Experts'Conference has been postponed until after the session of the Continuation Committee at Eisenach.

The Institute intends to publish the programmes of social work which have been drawn up by the Churches. A study of the effects of the European debts on religious and social life will also be undertaken later on.

The plan proposed by the European Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid to found a financial association in aid of the churches and religious institutions was warmly supported.

A private reception and a meal taken together at the Restaurant of the Committee of the Y.M.C.A. furnished an opportunity for bringing the Commission into contact with friends of the Stockholm Movement in Geneva. Professor Titius of Berlin, Dr. Garvie of London,

Pastor Elie Gounelle of Saint-Etienne spoke on the work of the Commission and the aim of the Institute.

Following on this gathering came a conference of the representatives of the different international organisations for the purpose of reaching an understanding as to methods of social research to be carried on by them in common, and on the subject of a common library and translation service. The possibility of occupying a common building was also examined, or failing that, the creation of a social centre for the international religious organisations.

* * *

The international Christian *Press Commission,* one of the organisations created by Stockholm, is arranging a Central European Conference in Basle from August 22-24. It will be attended principally by representatives of the Protestant press and of Protestant periodicals in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, but those interested on the work of the Christian press will also be welcome. The three main subjects to be discussed are : 1. The Tasks and Difficulties of the Christian Press ; 2. Ways and Means to a closer cooperation of the Christian Press ; 3. What is the attitude of the daily press in the countries represented to the questions of the Christian world and the tasks of the Stockholm movement ?

In connection with the conference there will be a special meeting of editors of Christian youth literature and possibly other meetings.

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The *Youth Commission* hopes that youth committees will be created in all the Churches ; it will however also be ready to cooperate with interdenominational associations. The chief task of the Commission is to arouse and extend the interest of youth in the Stockholm Movement and its objects by means of a press and information service.

The Commission also seeks to bring youth and the Church once more into close contact with one another. It is hoped to arrange for conferences at which representatives of the youth of the churches on the one hand, and the churches and religious organisations on the other, may exchange the results of the experience which they have gained. The first conference of this type will take place during the coming summer, and will deal with the subject : « The Orthodox Churches of the East and their relation to Youth» ; representatives of the Greek, Bulgarian, Roumanian, Jugoslav and Russian Churches will take part in it.

The efforts of Professor Kohnstamm, of Holland, have resulted in the opening out of a wider range of interest to the work of the Commission. Professor Kohnstamm pointed out the necessity of making clear to youth the interdependence of science and religion. A group of ten men drawn from the ranks of science, theology, education and writers for youth is to be formed for the study of this question, whilst at the same time the necessary documents and material will be placed at the disposal of youth leaders.

In this way it will be possible for the Commission to cooperate with the various organisations already in existence which have a similar aim, in and particular with the newly formed youth commission of the International Alliance for Friendship through the Churches.

B. Social Work and Movements Having a Religious Basis.

World Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association.

The World Committee and in particular its Commission for Social and industrial Questions are arranging for the coming summer a Study Course on Social and Industrial Questions. This course will be held in Schloss Bredeneck, near Hamburg, in the month of August, and will last three or four weeks. The lectures and study groups will be conducted in English and German by experts of outstanding position. The following subjects will be discussed : Development of Industry and National Economy, Problems of modern Labour Legislation ; Social Insurance, Training of Workers, Trade Unions, the Cooperative Movement, the Scientific Organisation of Industry and Commerce, International Peace. The study of religious and Biblical questions will also form part of the programme. Opportunity will be given for extensive discussion and private talks.

The necessity for a more profound acquaintance with the problems of social life is very strongly felt amongst the leaders of this movement, as also the desire to use the forces at its disposal for the solution of the social question.

* * *

The World's Student Christian Federation.

The last number of the *Bulletin* made a short mention of the meeting of the General Committee of the World's Student Christian Federation at Mysore, India. The meeting arrived at a number of important decisions, and resolved in particular on the development of a more intense effort in the domain of interconfessional and œcumenical activity, in which experience has already been encouraging. A decision already taken to appoint a Federation Secretary for work amongst Foreign Students was confirmed. Plans were elaborated for visits to students in the Far East and also for a study plan on the question of religious education, relations between the West and the East and the questions of Race and Nationality. The World Student Christian Federation (13, rue Calvin, Geneva) has published the Report of its General Secretary, H. L. Henriod « From Nyborg to Mysore. »

The next meeting of the General Committee will take place in the United States of America in the summer of 1931. Plans are also in view for a Student Conference for the Pacific Basin Area. This will probably be held in Honolulu.

* * *

An International Young Men's Conference in Germany.

The World's Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association has for a good many years been organising conferences for older boys and workers amongst boys in various parts of Europe, and has in that way done much to promote mutual understanding and a profounder conception of the œcumenical point of view amongst Christian youth. Such gatherings have taken place during the last few years at Vaumarcus in Switzerland, in the Park of Windsor Castle, at Szigliget in Hungary and in Gotland. The next international Christian Conference of this type will by held from 22-30 July at Burg Wernfels near Nuremberg, in Germany. It will afford the youthful visitors from 24 different countries of Europe and America an opportunity of forming an impression of the oldest castle in the possession of the Protestant young men's associations of Germany. The close proximity to Nuremburg and Franconian Switzerland will also enable them to become acquainted with one of the most beautiful districts of Germany.

* * *

International Federation of Protestant Employees' Associations.

As reported in an earlier number, at a conference of Protestant employees' Associations of Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, England and Denmark, which took place at Dűsseldorf in April 1928, it was decided to found an « International Federation of Protestant Employees Associations »

The statutes of the international federation contain the following important provisions :

« The International Federation takes as its aim, to make the principles of the Gospel of Jesus-Christ effective in the international sphere of social and economic problems, and to this end to appeal to the conscience of the class which it represents, and educate it for cooperative work. In particular it desires, whilst not itself performing the functions of an international trade union, to further all the efforts made by the Protestant employees in their various organisations to help and protect the economically weak class of the workers in the religious, moral and material domains.

The International Federation seeks to attain this aim by :

a) The maintenance of an international secretariate,

b) The organisation of international conferences,

c) The issue of publications,

d) The study of questions which come within the province of the Federation,

e) Propaganda work for the formation of an educative Protestant employees' movement in those countries in which such does not at present exist,

f) Cooperation with and assistance to the œcumenical and social efforts of the churches and their organisations, above all in the case of the International Institute for Social Christianity in Geneva.

g) The maintenance of relations with the International Labour Office in Geneva.

h) The maintenance of relations with such international organisations as stand on a definitely Christian basis.

i) Other methods which may directly or indirectly promote the aim of the Federation ».

Herr Georg *Streiter*, Chairman of the Federation of Protestant Employees Associations in Germany, who, as a member of the Commission of the Institute, has been entrusted with the task of maintaining the connection between the Geneva Institute and the new international federation of Protestant workers, writes as follows : « Through the foundation of an international federation of Protestant workers associations, an important step has been taken towards bringing the individual workers of the various countries into closer contact from the starting-point of the Gospel. It is a sign of the awakening of strong spiritual forces, which will certainly some day lead to an attempt to create a fellowship embracing the Protestant workers of all lands ».

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The « *International Association for Church Finance* » has just published a report on the international conference for Church Finance held in Glasgow in June 1928. (Church Finance To-day, to be obtained from the above Association, 55, West Regent Street, Glasgow, Scotland, Price 2 shillings ; 140 pages). The report contains extracts from the studies and discussions of the conference. These embraced the following subjects : Spiritual Basis of Church Finance, the General Economic Situation in the British Empire and in the Churches of the Continent ; Modern Methods in the Financial System of the Churches, (the system of weekly free will offerings, improvements of old methods, cooperation between the congregations and leaders of the Church, propaganda and educational work, the educational and spiritual values of systematic giving).

* * *

GERMANY

The Part Played by the Churches in the Settlement of the German Iron Industry Dispute.

In order to understand the intervention of the German churches in the iron dispute a short survey of the circumstances is necessary.

On the 1st October last year the Trade Unions declared that they would no longer accept the wages agreement. Their demand for higher wages was rejected by the employers on the ground of the unfavourable industrial situation. It was neither possible nor desirable for the Churches to intervene at this moment, for, contrary to the practice in other countries, the ensuing negociations fell within the province of the arbitrator appointed by the State. As these negociations led to no result, the employers issued notices to the men on October 13 and prepared for a lock-out on November 1. Further negociations conducted before the arbitration tribunal likewise failed. Thereupon the arbitrator announced his decision, and, after final fruitless negociations on October 30 and 31, this decision was declared binding by the Minister of Labour. The employers however refused to recognise the legal validity of this declaration, and on November 1 the lock-out came into force, affecting more than 200,000 workers.

The Trade Unions appealed to the Labour Tribunal against the action of the employers ; this appeal was rejected on the first hearing, but was later allowed, the arbitral decision being declared valid. The employers then appealed in turn against this judgment to the supreme court, the Labour Tribunal of the Reich, and the decision was thus once more postponed for four weeks.

In the meantime the local government representative of the district had endeavoured, on his own personal initiative, to bring about fresh negociations, and these had very nearly led to an agreement ; finally however they broke down. A decision seemed therefore to be postponed for weeks and only to be possible when the Labour Tribunal of the Reich had pronounced judgment.

This was the situation when the Churches decided to intervene. In their memorandum to the Central Government they pointed out that, in their opinion, neither the clearing up of the legal issue nor agreement as to the individual industrial questions involved could lead to industrial peace. They further suggested that, in view of the course of events, neither the parties to the dispute nor the state arbitration tribunals seemed to be in a position to find new ways to agreement.

The Churches therefore demanded the direct intervention of the Central Government itself and raised the question whether the Govern-

ment should not make an attempt to bring about renewed negociations between the parties in dispute through the mediation of well-known industrial experts possessing the confidence of both parties. This seemed the more desirable as, given a frank discussion of the fundamental issues of the dispute, it seemed possible that a solution might be found, considering that, according to trustworthy information, all those concerned in the conflict appeared to be ready to negociate.

In taking this step the Churches adopted the only possible course, and, as it subsequently proved, that which was destined to lead to success. They could not themselves attempt, by means of industrial experts of their own, to work out a basis of agreement, since in the first place the time was too short for this, and in the second, such intervention came within the province of the state arbitration authorities.

The Churches further expressly refrained from moral observations of a general character, in relation to the difficult situation in which thousands of employers and employed were plunged ; rather, they pointed out a definite way which might lead to a solution of these difficulties.

Their intervention received the serious attention of the Government and strengthened the pressure of public opinion in favour of the course here outlined. In the Minister of the Interior a personality was found in whom both parties to the dispute had confidence and whose decision they agreed to accept unconditionally.

A second article on the position taken by the political parties and the public in regard to this intervention of the Churches will be published in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

* * *

The Library of the Central Committee For Home Missions, (Berlin-Dahlem, Zietenster. 24) which was started before the war, now possesses at least 20.000 volumes and is capable of rendering valuable service to all those working in the domain of Home Missions and charitable organisations.

Special attention is paid to Church movements and social movements, progress and work in other countries, and to international relationships, conferences etc. Considerable attention is also devoted to the relations between Church and State, the Home Mission in its relation to social questions, Socialism, etc., and likewise to all sociological questions and questions of social ethics.

Books may be borrowed from the Library, which also gives bibliographical information.

* * *

FRANCE

Social Commission of Youth.

In a common desire for social action and under the inspiration of the Gospel there was formed on November 10 1928 a Commission for social study and activity which should bring together the representatives of the various Protestant youth organisations.

This Commission, in the words of one of its statutes "has for its aim to seek ways and methods to promote a cooperation of all the forces of Protestant Christian youth in the domain of social service according to the principles of the Gospel of Jesus-Christ." Each association retains entire freedom of action and is not bound in any way by the words or acts of the Secretary ot the Commission.

Regional and local commissions may be formed according to the same principles and methods as the National Commission.

The following are among the resolutions passed :

" For the instruction of youth in Christian social service the Commission will cooperate with the study camps already organised by the Youth Associations, and, if necessary, will organise one or more special conferences to be devoted entirely to Christian social questions... "

" It will draw up a list of public courses and conferences useful to youth from the point of view of Christian social service, and will itself organise, if necessary, courses and conferences along the lines of Christian social activity. "

" Finally, it will do its utmost, by all other methods of a practical nature, to lead young people to study more actively, and with greater coherence and mutual cooperation, the questions of social life and the putting into practice of the social principles of the Gospel ».

* * *

The Tenth Conference for the Elevation of the Birth Rate was held at Rheims in September 1928. Protestant circles were very strongly represented ; and the Secretary of the Protestant Commission for Conferences for the Elevation of the Birth Rate presented a report on " The moral and social influence of Protestantism ", in which he pointed out that it is the duty of the Churches to exercise an ever growing influence on the social life of the people, and stressed the programme of the new Commission of the Protestant Federation for Moral and Social Activity, which may serve as a starting point for more energetic action on the part of the Churches against social evils.

The Commission unanimously adopted the conclusions reached by the report to the effect that " all the Protestant Churches should support, with all the spiritual forces at their command, the campaign undertaken by the associations for public morality against the centres of

corruption which are exercising an evil influence and seeking to undermine the activity of the religious and lay associations working amongst youth ".

Another resolution of the author of the Report was also adopted, calling upon " the various evangelisation commissions of the ecclesiastical unions to give an important position, in their missionary and evangelistic work, to the restoration of public morality and the promotion of the birth rate" .

The Council of the Protestant Federation, at its meeting in February of this year, adopted the suggestions of its Commission of Moral and Social Activity for the organisation of the Protestant Section of the Conference for the Elevation of the Birth Rate which is to be held at Rheims in September.

* * *

The " Avant-Garde "

In response to a resolution passed by the Congress of Paris last November, it has been decided to publish ,in addition to the "Review of Social Christianity " (Revue du Christianisme Social) a periodical which will appear under the title " *l'Avant-Garde* ", It is intended to be of a less technical and more popular character than the "Review" and to appeal especially to the masses.

Its programme is that of the Federation of Social Christianity, the World Conference of Stockholm (and the Life and Work Institute of Geneva), the World Alliance for the Promotion of Friendship through the Churches, the World Movement of Brotherhoods, and other similar associations.

Hitherto there has not been in France any popular periodical representing all these organisations.

The " *Avant-Garde* " which will fill the gap thus left, will be, in the words of its editors, " a periodical definitely democratic in tone, inspired by the political attitude of the Republican Left, with a Christian social basis, and will therefore appeal to Christian Socialism, Christian pacifism, and all those causes which have at heart the purification of public morality, social justice, brotherly sympathy, friendship between the nations, the federation of the Churches, and the spiritual re-birth of our people. "

* * *

MADAGASCAR

Christian anti-alcoholic propaganda has been conducted with fresh zeal of late in the Island of Madagascar, where the traffic in liquor is

extensively carried on both on the coast and inland, in towns and villages alike. The Madagascan Blue Cross, which had been inactive for some time, is now alive and busy. For the methodical and efficient prosecution of its activities it has recently created a Central Committee, at Tananarive, of which the missionary, M. Mondain, is Chairman. whilst groups and sections are being formed throughout the Island, An anti-alcoholic review in the language of the country appears twice a month, and the Government publicly recognised the Madagascan Blue Cross by a decree of June 4 1928.

* * *

HOLLAND

The Protestant Workers' Movement. — In Holland the following Protestant workers' associations exist :

1) The ,, Nederlandsch Werklieden Verbond " ,, Patrimonium ", the oldest of the Christian workers' organisations, which was founded on March 19 1877.

,, Patrimonium " takes as its aim the dissemination of the knowledge of Christian Social principles, as a starting-point for the elevation of the interests of society as a whole, and the working-class in particular, by all possible means.

The Association has members in all the various Protestant denominations and now counts 190 divisions with 12,860 members.

The Association publishes a Christian social weekly, ,, Patrimonium ", edited by C. Smeenk, a Member of Parliament. Efforts are made to work in the same direction by the organisation of Christian social conferences and by setting up popular book-shops. In order to exercise a greater influence on Christian social work, meetings are arranged with the students of the various universities and also with the Christian youth organisations and Church Councils.

The Association also occupies itself with the housing question by establishing building funds and building societies, as also with technical education, vocational training and voluntary sickness insurance.

2) The « Christelijk National Werkmansbond " was founded on May 23 1885 in Rotterdam for members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Its members are chiefly workers, but small tradesmen are also admitted. The ,, social programme " lays down as its object cooperation with all social movements and the diffusion of knowledge with regard to social questions. In 1927 the number of members was 11.583.

3) On the 10th January 1910 the ,, Nederlandsche Luthersch Bond voor Christelijk-Sociale Action " was founded by the Lutheran workers'

associations of Amsterdam, Haarlem and Schiedam ; it has some 200 members.

4) The « Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond in Nederland " was founded on July 1 1909. The association was at first intended to be an interconfessional federation. The idea did not however find fruitful soil in Holland, the Roman Catholic Church having pronounced itself against interconfessional trade unions and in favour of Roman Catholic associations. The Christilejk Nationaal Vakverbond therefore became a federation of Protestant workers. On the 1st January 1928 21 trade unions were affiliated to it, with a total membership of 63,636 (1926, 48,964 ; 1927, 51,982).

The « Commissie voor Samenwerking " arranges study courses for the paid members of the Executive Committee and the leaders of the Christian Workers' Movement.

* * *

NORWAY

In Oslo a law for the provision of Pensions for Mothers is in force, according to which mothers who have no man to provide for them, and who have been resident in the city for fifteen years, receive a pension graded according to the number of their children (600 Kronen for one child, 5000 Kronen for five children, up to the age of 15, and if the children attend a technical school, up to the age of 17). The pension may be withheld in cases where mothers neglect to perform the duties of motherhood. The results of the law would appear to have been very satisfactory up to the present time.

(Führerdienst, Barmen 1929, p. 111.)

* * *

SWITZERLAND

The Commission formed to work against the introduction of gambling was not dissolved after the vote of December 2, 1928 sanctioning the re-introduction of gambling establishments. It is felt that it should continue to follow the course of events and take all possible steps to preserve the country from falling a prey to the old abuses. It has just submitted to the central committee a memorandum which it intends to present to the Federal Council, begging that the Council will not authorise the opening of gambling establishments in large centres and university towns.

The French-Swiss Association for Hygiene and Morals, the *Pro Juventute* Association and the French-Swiss Social Department have

together organised a series of 12 lectures on the right employment of leisure, and the Secretariate of the first Association has arranged for 7 wireless talks to be given on various aspects of the use of leisure. A new French-Swiss Commission for the Popular Cinema has also been formed.

In order to commemorate in permanent fashion the life of Josephine Butler The « Association for the Improvement of Morals " has decided to call itself in future the " Josephine Butler Association for the Improvement of Morals ".

The " Genevese Society for Public Service " has founded an anti-alcoholic dispensary which enjoys the support of the State Council.

* * *

The Social Commission of the Geneva National Church.

The Geneva Church has recently set up a Social Commission. It consists of representatives of the Church, employers and employees, together with independent persons occupied with the social question. The Commission has already begun its work. It occupies itself on the one hand with the study of local conditions in the light which they throw upon the bigger social questions, on the other hand with the social faith or principles of the various Churches, with a view to working out a declaration of principle on the part of the Geneva Church.

* * *

Interconfessional Service in Geneva

On January 20 an interconfessional service was held in St. Peter's Cathedral, Geneva, in which the local clergy of the Russian Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican, and German Lutheran Churches and the Reformed Church of Geneva took part. Over a thousand persons were present.

The service had been arranged with the object of giving actual expression, in the life of the town, to the new Christian fellowship based on an ultimate community of faith. The sermon was preached by the priest of the Old Catholic Church, the lessons were read by clergymen of the Anglican Church and a pastor of the Reformed Church, and prayer was offered by the priest of the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Pastor. The choir of the Russian Church sang a " Te Deum ".

* * *

A *Monthly Devotional Service* has been started in Geneva for members of the various international organisations, official and private, and for all those who, in one way or another, are connected with them.

These services are intended to give members of these organisations an opportunity for seeking together the spiritual power necessary for the accomplishment of their respective tasks.

The services are held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Chapel of the Maccabees (St. Peter's Cathedral). They began on January 15, and are well attended. They would therefore appear to meet a real need.

The following organisations, which have taken the initiative in the matter, are responsible in turn for the arrangement of the service : Christian Social Institute, The World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., The World's Student Christian Federation, The International Service of the Society of Friends..

* * *

" *The Friends of Stockholm* ". The Continuation Committee, at its Prague meeting, suggested the formation of groups of « Friends of Stockholm " in the different countries ; these groups would represent the Stockholm idea nationally and locally. During the course of last winter a number of discussions of the Stockholm Movement took place under the auspices of the Stockholm Institute. A Geneva group of " Friends of Stockholm " (Compagnons de Stockholm) is being formed

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Federation of Czech Christian Trade Unions held its Congress at Brno on December 8 and 9. The following demands were formulated :

Strict observance of the Eight Hour Day, Revision of the law respecting Paid Holidays, the introduction of a law concerning collective contracts, rationalisation of methods of work with a view to the diminution of hours of work and increase of wages without any corresponding increase in the difficulty of conditions of work, the introduction of family bonuses, revision of the law concerning the salaries of state officials, legal extension of the rights and duties of works' councils, the setting up of Chambers of Labour and Labour Courts, the introduction of Unemployment Insurance, the revision and extension of Accident Insurance, improvement of the insurance system for workers in mines, election of the administrative bodies of sickness insurance.

* * *

BULGARIA

The Bulgarian, Association for the Protection of Children, following the precedent of 1926, organised in 1928 a Child Protection Day through-

out the whole country. The direction of the Central Committee for the organisation of the Child Protection Day was in the hands of Mgr. Steffan, one of the leading figures of the Stockholm Movement in the Orthodox World. The Day was a great success, morally as well as materially. The public authorities gave every assistance in regard to the preparations and arrangements for the demonstration. It is perhaps of even greater importance, however, to note that even the tiniest towns and villages of the provinces completely grasped the idea of the Day and contributed towards its successful carrying out. The Child Protection Day contributed greatly to make the Geneva Declaration known throughout all circles of the population.

* * *

ESTHONIA

On January 22-24 the annual Theological Conference took place in Tartu. The Dean of the Theological Faculty of the University of Tartu, Professor Rahamägi, spoke of the social work of the Churches and the Copec Movement. He presented to the conference various studies, two of which deserve to be noted beyond the frontiers of Esthonia. It is suggested that permanent social secretaries should be appointed for the theological conferences and pastors' conferences, and it is also proposed to start an Esthonian Christian social institute in connection with the Theological Faculty of the University of Tartu. This Institute would be linked up with the International Christian Social Institute in Geneva.

* * *

GREAT BRITAIN

The Christian Social Council of the Churches.

On the 21st January the opening session of the Christian Social Council took place, following on a service in the Chapel of Westminster Abbey.

The object of this organisation according to its constitution, is the application of Christian principles to industrial and economic questions, and the unification, as far as possible, of the various associations which have a similar aim, together with cooperation in social research work.

The new organisation is continuing the work of Copec and represents the Stockholm Movement in England. Its Study Committee has prepared a programme of work which provided for the study and in-

vestigation of the following questions : the function of the Christian conscience in a non-Christian world ; the attitude of the Christian conscience to industry, politics and the questions of war and peace. A study conference is being arranged for on the subject of the "just price " ; it will be held in Birmingham in April of this year.

In the April and July issues of " Stockholm " will appear articles on this subject from the pen of experts, which will treat the question from a historical point of view and from that of the present-day. Further studies are to be made on the question of the investment of capital from the Christian standpoint and on the principles of financial policy.

Other questions will also be taken up in cooperation with the International Institute for Life and Work in Geneva.

* * *

IRELAND

The Annual Report of the " Christian Citizenship Council " of Dublin for 1927-28 gives an account of a period of considerable activity This chiefly took the form of an anti-alcoholic campaign, the protection of illegitimate children and their mothers, and an anti-gambling campaign (intensive propaganda for the carrying through of the measure prohibiting the admission of young people below the age of eighteen to gambling houses.) The Council also took an active share in the movement for cheap houses, which also constitutes a step towards the solution of the problem of unemployment.

The Council likewise endeavours to arouse interest in the various church groups represented on it for all questions and movements concerning the social and moral welfare of the community.

* * *

AMERICA

The Strike in the Textile Industry and the Churches.

The Bulletin of the Federal Council for November spoke of the strike in the textile industry of New Bedford, Massachusetts, and of the arbitration and reconciliation work done by the Church Council of New Bedford. The Social Service Committee of the New Bedford Church Council instructed its secretary to visit the leaders of both parties in the endeavour to promote a mutual understanding. A press campaign insisted on the importance of a complete change of attitude on the part of employers and employees in the textile industry in regard

to their mutual relations. An engineer and a high official spoke at a general meeting organised by the Churches, on the situation and the economic points of view involved, and likewise emphasised the necessity of such a change of attitude. The local Church Council, according to the report of the Federal Council, undoubtedly exercised a favourable influence on the final settlement of the conflict. An independent citizens' group (Citizens' Mediation Committee) also made efforts to arrive at a peaceful settlement. Finally these disinterested organisations proposed a compromise which was accepted, and the crisis thus came to an end.

* * *

The Quakers have recently made two important attempts to promote a better understanding between the races. Two Japanese professors were invited to spend a period of several months in lecturing at various Quaker schools of a higher type on intellectual movements amongst Japanese youth. The Quaker Committee for the Promotion of Understanding between the Races also invited a representative of the black race in America, Miss Crystal Bird, a former secretary of the National Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association, to speak at meetings of young whites on the race question and the intellectual and cultural aspirations of the negro. Miss Bird spoke with great success in a large number of towns on the following subjects, amongst others : The Voice of Negro Youth ; the Negro as a Human Being ; Negro Spirituals and their Meaning ; Is there a Race Problem ?

* * *

The Federal Council of Churches set up, in 1927, a National Committee on Marriage and the Home. This Committee has published, after extensive study and group discussion, a first report on ideals of love and marriage ; the report has behind it the authority of the Commission of the Council on the Church and Social Service, and the Federal Council of Churches itself. (The Protestant Church View of Sex, Love and Marriage, with introduction by the Rev. Dr. Worth M. Tippy, Reprint from Current History, Issue February 1929).

C. Activities of secular international organisations.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Question of Coal.

The delegation entrusted by the Economic Committee of the League of Nations with the task of making an investigation into the coal problem and of deciding whether it is desirable and possible to undertake international action in regard to the coal industry, recently organised a *consultation of experts* from eleven different countries (producers, consumers, exporters and importers.)

These experts, chosen as having a wide practical knowledge of the coal industry, while not representatives of employers' organisations nevertheless hold positions which enabled them to take a broad view of the whole coal question, including the production, consumption, trade and transport of coal.

In the course of this consultation, which lasted from January 8-12, they examined the documents furnished by the members of the Economic Committee on the coal situation in their respective countries. The information thus given was compared, verified and added to.

Apparently the experts agreed that " the present situation of the coal industry constitutes an international problem ; that, within the limits of their power, the responsibility for the application of the necessary remedies falls, in the first place, on those in control of the industry ". It also appeared that certain aspects of the problem, — the question of tariffs and certain commercial methods — fall within the scope of the Economic Committee. But there is a social side to the question which must not be neglected.

The consultation brought out clearly the fact that some of the experts of the producing countries consider that international cooperation might contribute to a solution of the difficulties ; others expressed themselves doubtful on this point. It was suggested that these consultations of experts might be continued more or less directly under the auspices of the League of Nations. As the consultation was only intended to supply premilinary information, no decision was arrived at on this subject, but measures are in view for the continuation of the investigation.

The Economic Committee stressed the importance of the work carried out. It likewise decided to organise a similar consultation of *experts from amongst the workers*, chosen for their technical knowledge of the coal question, on the advice of the International Labour Office,

from the following countries : Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Poland, and Spain.

This consultation took place on February 27 under the presidency of M. Trendelenburg. The workers' experts expressed their views on the general character of the problem. In the opinion of many of them the most pressing matter would be an effort, under the auspices of the International Labour Office, to reduce and equalise the hours of work in coal mines. They all agreed as to the utility of a permanent Council for coal which would consider the questions of production, markets, etc. — and the progressive standardisation of conditions of work and living conditions. On this Council would sit representatives of the governments, the employers, the workers and the consumers. One of the most interesting results of the work was the analysis made by the experts of the statistics with regard to unemployment.

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Refugees' Committee.

The Consultative Committee for refugees met at Geneva on February 15 under the presidency of Major Johnson, the League High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Committee, which is composed of representatives of private organisations, considered the question of the evacuation of Russian refugees from Constantinople, of whom nearly one thousand have been evacuated in the course of the last year, thanks to the work of the High Commissioner. Of the 1800 who still remain, one thousand have expressed the wish to be naturalised ; a large proportion of the remainder will be evacuated to Palestine, France and Brazil.

As regards the establishment of Armenian refugees in Syria, in spite of the results already obtained (nearly 8000 refugees established) this work will necessarily take a considerable time. Nearly 32.000 refugees still remain to be settled, and considerable funds will have to be found for this purpose. Meanwhile, thanks to the generous help of the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which have contributed more than 20.00 dollars for this purpose, relief work amongst the colonists settled in the new agricultural districts is also provided for. The Consultative Committee expressed the opinion that the excellent work of the High Commissioner should be continued as long as there still remain large masses of refugees unable to return to their own country.

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The permanent Central Committee set up in virtue by the *Opium* Convention of 1925 for the purpose of controlling the traffic in drugs, met in Geneva from January 15-19.

It laid down its forms of procedure, its relations with the Consultative Committee, the choice of its personnel and the nature of the statistic to be demanded from the States adhering to the Convention.

At its next meeting in April the Committee will prepare a report to be submitted to the Council and will make suggestions concerning its organisation and work.

The Consultative Committee also met from January 17 to February 2 ; its work included the examination of the reports presented by the States interested in the matter, the question of the illicit traffic in narcotics, (more especially in the Near East and in South America), measures adapted to assure the control of smuggling, and an American proposal for the limitation of the manufacture of narcotics ; this proposal was not immediately accepted by the Committee, which however reserved the right to examine the question of the limitation of the manufacture of narcotics at some future time.

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The Commission on the Protection of Children of the League of Nations held its 5th Session from April 12-19 under the presidency of the Marquis Paulucci di Calbilo (Italy).

The Committee considered reports on the draft conventions for the repatriation of minors who have abandoned the authority of their parents or guardians, and for assistance to minors of foreign nationality, of which mention was made in the last number of the Bulletin.

A preliminary draft proposes to impose on the contracting States the obligation of facilitating the repatriation of children residing in their territory against the wishes of those persons or authorities who are their legal guardians.

A proposal has been made to draw the attention of governments to the importance of such questions as the endeavour to establish paternity, the recognition of natural children, the legal position of the child as regards its mother and its right to food and education. Those responsible for the proposal insist that in all laws for the protection of children the illegitimate child shall be given an equal measure of protection with the legitimate child.

The question of the cinematograph was considered. The Committee decided to draw the attention of the International Institute for the Educational Cinema, whose headquarters are in Rome, to the question of the means to be employed to increase the production, exchange and exhibition of films of an amusing character specially adapted for children.

Finally the Committee dealt with the question of children's courts and considered a plan for an enquiry into the auxiliary services of these courts, together with a questionnaire which seeks to establish the ulterior causes of the offences committed by children (study of the family and social background, the physical and mental condition of the child), which would enable the judge to take the measures best suited to the case.

The Commission on the Traffic in Women and Children began its eighth session on April 19. Amongst the questions on the agenda are the following : Penalties to be imposed on persons living on the immoral earnings of women, the abolition of *maisons tolerees*, and suppression of obscene literature.

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International Labour Office.

The last session of the Governing Body, which took place on March 11 and 12, was the occasion of an important discussion on the eight hours' day at which three Ministers of Labour were present, — those of Great Britain, France and Germany. The centre-point of the discussion was the demand of Great Britain for a revision of the eight hours' convention. This demand which was based on the fact that the terms of the Convention are ambiguous and susceptible of varying interpretations on the part of the countries adhering to it, was strongly opposed. The opposition was especially strong from the side of the workers' delegates, who insisted on the fact that any attempt to upset the eight hours' convention would at the same time shake the confidence of the workers in the International Labour Organisation. The ratifications which have been made up to the present generally stipulate for the adhesion of Great Britain to the Convention ; a revision of the Convention would therefore be a fatal check to the efforts for ratification now being made in various countries, and would in any case retard such ratification. This refusal of one of the greatest industrial countries to accept the Convention, although it is said not to imply any criticism of the principle of the eight hours' day, thus creates a somewhat serious situation and causes legitimate anxiety amongst the masses of the workers.

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As stated in the last issue of the *Bulletin*, the 12th Session of the International Labour Conference will begin on May 30, one of the subjects of discussion being the question of *forced labour*.

In view of this the International Labour Office has sent to the Governments of all the States Members of the Organisation the report which it has drawn up on this subject to serve as a basis for the discussions.

This report is the outcome of a lengthy research in which the Office has had the assistance of a Committee of Experts specially competent in the question of forced labour. It starts by recalling the fact that the question became of special importance in the international field as a result of the adoption, by the Assembly of the League of Nations, of the Convention in regard to slavery, It then sets forth in detail the legislation and practice of the various States in their colonial possessions, protectorates or mandated territories. It quotes the opinions of a large number of experts as to the social effects and the economic value of forced labour. Finally, it proceeds to deduce from the documents collected the principles on which it would seem possible to base an international agreement which should immediately remove the abuses of forced labour.

The conclusion of the report contains a draft questionnaire to be sent to the Governments in case the Conference should decide to place the question of forced labour on the agenda of the 1930 session, with a view to arriving at a definite decision in the form of a draft convention or recommendation.

The object aimed at is in the first place to abolish forced labour as a form of slavery in disguise, the maintenance of which " is in contradiction to all modern conceptions of the relations of man to man ". If, however, it should prove difficult to suppress it immediately in certain districts, it is absolutely necessary that it should be subjected to strict regulations with a view to the prevention of all possible abuses; it must only be permitted in connection with public works, whilst forced labour on behalf of private enterprises must be declared illegal.

The agreement reached will concern itself amongst other things with hours of work, wages, and the responsibility of the competent authorities for the maintenance of the workers in case of accident or illness due to their conditions of work. The question of forced labour raises a number of points of a very varied character connected not only with the regulation of conditions of work, in the strict sense of the term, but also with the nature of the work, the types of persons who may be called on to carry it out and the conditions under which recourse to this particular form of labour would appear to be admissible.

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The International Labour Office has also drawn up a report on the question of *hours of work of employés*, which is likewise on the agenda of the Conference.

The extension of the regulation of hours of work to employés was proposed at the Washington Conference but the suggestion was not then adopted. For some time there has been a movement for the re-opening of the question, and after some preliminary investigation, the Governing Body has decided to place it on the agenda of the next Conference.

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The question of *accident prevention* has also a place on the programme of the Conference ; this subject was discussed at the last Session. A general report on *unemployment* will likewise be presented for discussion by the International Labour Office.

On the 10th October there will be a second session of the Conference, which will be devoted to maritime questions, and in particular *to hours of work on board and the improvement of conditions amongst sailors during their stay in port.*

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The Industrial and Labour Information issued by the International Labour Office has published a series of articles dealing with the 8th Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions held at Moscow in December 1928. We give below a few extracts from the address of the President of the Central Council, Mr. Tomsky, which is reproduced in part in the issue of January 21 from the Pravda :

The danger which threatened educational work, consisted partly in the want of ideas and principles, and partly in a certain intellectual rigour which drove the worker away from the club. They should not forget that if they did not succeed in satisfying the worker in their clubs he would go to the public-house or to the Baptists...

When they were told that religious sentiment was once more gaining ground among the workers, and that the fault was that of the social classes which were opposed to them, it might well be admitted that the influence of such classes counted for something in the matter, but they must confess that they also were to blame, since they could not satisfy the spiritual needs of the workers...

On the subject of religion, Mr. Tomsky, in a later speech, remarked :

We are carrying on an intellectual warfare against religion. We are patiently explaining to the workers the counter-revolutionary and antiproletarian character of all religions. We are educating them in a scientific and Marxist spirit, but we do not go to the length of excluding workers who are believers. If we should dismiss all believers from our ranks, who would be left in the unions ? The centres of our unions would not be much larger than those of the Communist Party...